

A
LETTER

TO THE

Lords Commissioners

FOR

TRADE and PLANTATIONS,

CONCERNING

The ADVANTAGE of GIBRALTAR
to the TRADE of Great-Britain.

WITH

Some PROPOSALS to render that PLACE
more useful.

Commerce

By a TURKEY MERCHANT.

To which is prefix'd,

A CHART of the *Mediterranean* Sea.

Wentley

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

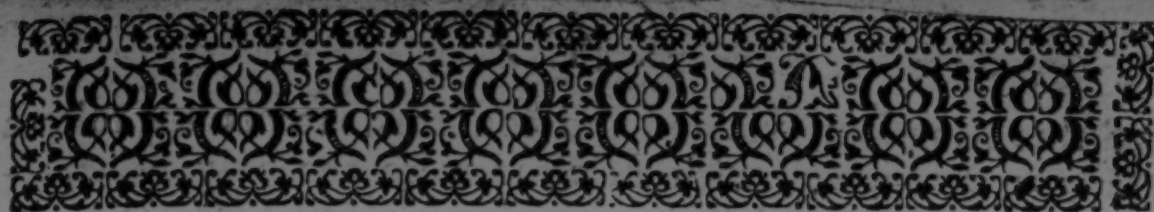
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LETTER



BY J. T. ...
A CHARTER ...



To the Right Honourable

The Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations.

My Lords,



S you are the Guardians of the Trade and Commerce of *Great-Britain*; and every Affair relating thereto, properly comes under your Inspection: I cannot acquit myself, either as an *Englishman* or a Trader, if I am silent at a Time, when, as I conceive, the Interests of Both are in Danger of suffering, by the Cession of *Gibraltar* to the Crown of *Spain*.

To be assur'd that this is no mere Chimerical Fear; your Lordships need only review the *French* King's Declaration; publish'd here in *English* the last Summer; wherein 'tis asserted in exprefs Words, "That 8thly and in the last Place, "the [*French*] King has engaged himself to obtain for the "King of *Spain*, the Restitution of *Gibraltar*." Here, your Lordships may see, the King of *France* ENGAGES, that a Place of the greatest Concern to the Trading Part of

of this Kingdom, yielded and confirm'd to us by solemn Treaty, and which with *Minorca* were the only Advantages gained by the last long and expensive War, is to be given up ; and that without the Mention of any pretended Equivalent to be made us for it : And there is good Reason to apprehend, that so public a Declaration, made by a Sovereign in Alliance with us, was not without Foundation to support it. Your Lordships, I say, need only consider This, to be satisfy'd that 'tis no groundless Apprehension is the Cause of this Address ; but a just Concern for the Honour and Welfare of the *British* Nation ; especially for the Trading Part of it. A Concern, that ought to warm the Heart of every Patriot, and to make him exert his utmost Efforts to prevent so ruinous a Project taking Effect.

Give me leave, *My Lords*, to lay before you a brief Sketch of the Situation of this Place, and of the Advantages of it to the Trade of *Great-Britain* ; with some Proposals to render it yet more useful : And then let me beg of your Lordships to represent this Matter in its just Light to the Present Parliament, that by that Means a Place of such Consequence to the Interest of *Britain* may be preserv'd to us ; and thereby all our *Mediterranean* Trade, the Success of which in a great measure depends on this Tenure, be prevented from falling into other Hands, to the Ruin of so considerable a Number of Merchants, and so large a Branch of the Revenue.

Gibraltar is seated on a Rocky Hill, near the Southermost Point of *Spain*, at the Opening of the *Streights Mouth* into the *Mediterranean*. It is opposite to *Ape's Hill* near *Ceuta* in *Barbary* ; at about Seven Leagues Distance. These two *Hills* were anciently call'd the *Pillars* of that famous *Hercules*, concerning whom there are so many uncertain Tradi-

Traditions. Nature, by this Situation, seems to have annex'd to this Place the Sovereignty of the *Mediterranean* Seas, it being almost impossible for any Ship to pass by it, without being observ'd. It is at present a *Peninsula*, being join'd to *Spain* only by a small *Isthmus*, which might easily be destroy'd, and thereby *Gibraltar* become an Island, (if it were thought proper;) as has lately been demonstrated by an ingenious Gentleman who was upon the Spot. The Port there is very commodious, sufficient for any Number of Shipping; there is also very good Anchorage, and a Mole well defended. From the Watch Tower, in clear Weather, Ships may be discover'd at Ten Leagues distance, that come either Eastward or Westward; whereby sufficient Notice may be given for our Cruizers to intercept an Enemy.

This important Place, thus happily situated, both for protecting our own Trade in the *Mediterranean*, and for annoying that of the Enemy, was taken by the *English* Fleet the 24th of *July*, 1704, after an Attack of but Three Days. An Action, which will remain a Monument of the Bravery and Resolution of the *English* Seamen! But, instead of improving the Advantage of having this Place, as our Enemies fear'd, and as our Interest should have obliged us; during the Remainder of the Last War, little Resort was had to it by our Ships of Force, and less Encouragement was given to its Trade; nay, for several Months together not a Ship lay in this Port, but one Sixth Rate: While the *French* and *Spaniards* carry'd on their Trade, and their Ships pass'd to and from the *Mediterranean* unmolested, through our want of Force there to prevent them. A Neglect so surprizing, that could They have imagin'd, we should so little have consulted the Advantage arising from the Situation of this Place, they would never have thrown
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away so much Blood and Treasure in attempting to recover it. Yet notwithstanding this Neglect, the Benefit that accru'd to our Trade, in the Safety of our own Shipping, from the taking this Place out of the Enemy's Hands, at the Beginning of that War, was sufficient to counter-balance all the Expence we have been at since, in keeping it.

But if, instead of thus Neglecting the Place, a sufficient Number of *English* Cruizers had been upon this Station, how much would such Management have promoted our Interest; by not only protecting our own Trade, but by destroying that of the *Spaniards* and *East-France* to the *West-Indies*, and that of *West-France* to *Cadiz*; which at that time was very considerable, consisting not only of such Commodities as supply'd the *Spanish* Fleets with their Lading for the *West-Indies*, but of great Quantities of Woollen Manufacture for the Consumption of *Spain*. And sure this would have been no small Advantage, (if it had been pursu'd) that by being possess'd of *Gibraltar*, we had been able to have secur'd, in a great Degree, the *Mediterranean* Trade; since not many Years ago, upon a Petition of the Merchants to the Parliament, it was represented to the Lords of the Committee, that besides the *Turkey* Trade, and the Trade from several other Places in the *Mediterranean*, the Customs of *Venice*, *Leghorn* and *Genoa*, amounted to about Three Hundred Thousand Pounds *per Annum*?

Another great Advantage which we enjoy from the Possession of *Gibraltar* is, that our Factories, in any Time of Rupture between *Great Britain* and *Spain*, (as was lately the Case) who are obliged to retire in haste, will there find a Sanctuary, and have an Opportunity of gathering in their Effects, and recovering their Debts; which would otherwise either be quite lost, or be return'd home short of their
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real Value. And in such a Case, notwithstanding any Prohibition, by the Happiness of this Situation, we may always carry on a Private Trade to *Spain*, very much to our own Advantage.

The Possession of *Gibraltar* gives us an Influence over all the States, whose Trade obliges their Ships to pass that Way: Nay, we might by a vigilant Management and strict Look outs, so entirely command this Passage of the *Streights Mouth*, that we might possibly require a Tribute from Ships sailing through it, in much the same manner as the King of *Denmark* exacts one of all Vessels that pass the *Sound*; which, if it could be effected, might be appropriated towards defraying the Necessary Expences of the Garrison maintained there.

Another very considerable Advantage that arises to us from the Possession of *Gibraltar*, is, with Respect to the *Moors*, who are the Subjects of the Emperor of *Morocco*. These are such a faithless and unsteady People, that 'tis well known the most solemn Ties and Treaties are not sufficient to bind them, longer than they imagine it their Interest to observe them; so that it may be asserted as a Maxim, That we are never to expect any Peace with them will be of long Duration, unless we have a Power near at hand to keep them in Awe, both to distress their Trade, as well as preserve our own. And where can we have a Power more aptly placed for these Purposes, than at *Gibraltar*? For *Tetuan*, one of their Ports, lies just within the *Streights*, *Tangier* is even in the *Streights Mouth*; and *Larack*, *Memora* and *Sallee*, could not possibly stand more conveniently for the Interruption of our *Mediterranean* Trade, than they do. While we are at War with these People, therefore, a Squadron must be maintain'd to cruize on them; which, without the Possession of *Gibraltar*, will be far from answering the

the Services intended. To this Port they may not only resort, but Ships of the Fifth or Sixth Rate (which are granted to be the most proper to cruize on the *Moors*,) may at any Time careen or refit there. To evidence the Truth of this, I need only mention that the late Vice-Admiral *Cornwall* careen'd there the Ships *Tartar*, *Sheerness*, *Biddiford*, *Speedwell*, &c. several times: And 'tis presum'd that both the Old and New Mole, at no great Expence, may be render'd much more Useful. Whereas, if *Gibraltar* be given up, the Ships on Service against the *Moors* can refit no nearer than *Lisbon*; which being so distant from the Enemy, and attended with so many Inconveniencies, 'tis more than probable, that Ships may clean at *Gibraltar*, and be out again on Service, in one Fourth of the Time that they could at *Lisbon*. And this would equally hold for Ships of a higher Rank, provided there was a Hulk at *Gibraltar*.

Were *Gibraltar* under proper Regulations as to Trade, (particularly as to the Establishment of a Civil Power) we should then, no doubt, have Numbers of His Majesty's Subjects resort thither, and probably have as considerable a Factory there, as at most Trading Ports that Way: But, as it at present stands, the Advantages of its being a free Port are chiefly reap'd by Foreigners, who, besides the Garrison, are almost the only Inhabitants. In such a Case, (if we were at Peace with the *Moors*) we might find a great Account in the Trade to *Barbary*, no Place being better seated for that Commerce than this is: For as *Cadiz* carries on a considerable Trade thither, *Gibraltar* might much more conveniently, if it were stock'd with our own Merchants. So that if we consider *Gibraltar* either at Peace or at War with *Barbary*, it is of the highest Importance to us.

But besides the Advantage this important Place is, and may be, of to *Great Britain*, we ought to consider how
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vastly prejudicial it would be in the Hands of the *Spaniards*, or any other Trading Nation. It would then undoubtedly be very expensive or very dangerous for us to carry on any Part of our *Mediterranean* Trade; since Others, no doubt, would make a proper Use of the happy Situation of this Place; which we have thus long neglected; and would consider it, as it is, the Key to that Commerce. A small Strength, well apply'd, would avail much; and a few *Spanish* Gallies, or *French* Privateers, would so much prevent the Success of our Trade to those Parts, that we should soon be too sensible of the Consequence of this Place, if we should be ever infatuated enough to part with it.

We have not heard of many Instances of this Misfortune, having had but few Wars with *Spain*; and perhaps it may be asserted as a Maxim, that the fewer the better: But 'tis well known that, at a Time when *England* made the greatest Figure abroad, Measures were concerted for taking this valuable Place; and that too, when our Trade to those Parts was not carry'd to near the Height it is at present, and consequently could not be equally prejudic'd as now it may be.

'Tis very strange, therefore, that at a Time when we have engaged in a War chiefly for the Interest of our Neighbours, and have been so successful throughout the Course of it; 'tis very strange, I say, to hear it asserted, that by a Peace we are to yield up any Part of what we possess'd before the War began; especially, that we are to yield up a Place so important, as this appears to be, to the Security of our Trade.

My Lords,

I have chiefly mention'd those Advantages that are or may be made of *Gibraltar*, with respect to the Trade of these Kingdoms; without considering its Importance otherways to the Government: Such as the Honour of being Ma-

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sters of the Entrance into the *Mediterranean*, and thereby preventing any Naval Power in it, from being formidable to us : Such as our early Knowledge of the Naval Preparations either in *Marseilles*, *Toulon*, *Barcelona*, or other Ports of the *French* or *Spaniards* in the *Mediterranean*, and preventing their Junction with any other Armament : Such as our having a Store-House in Time of War, and a Place for our Fleets to resort to : Such as reducing the Naval Strength of *France*, by rendring it impossible for them to supply their Southern Parts with Stores : Such as keeping in Awe the *Italian* Princes, and Pyrratical States : And many other Considerations I might mention to the Interest and Honour of the Nation. I have, *My Lords*, I say, not consider'd any of these Advantages ; which surely must have their Weight with all Wise and Honest Men ; but have chiefly confin'd my self to the Benefit or Disadvantage this Place may be made of to our Trade, if it should remain in our own Hands, or to be deliver'd into those of either *France* or *Spain*, &c.

'Tis granted indeed, that in Time of Peace, our Trade to the *Mediterranean* is expos'd to little or no Danger ; and consequently, that the Effects of this valuable Acquisition are then in a great Measure lost : But whoever considers the State of *Europe*, and our Readiness and Engagements to take part in its Quarrels, must think it the Business of the Public to look forward, and provide against any such Accident, tho' it could be suppos'd more remote. And no doubt but, in the mean time, Methods may be fallen upon to help the Nation in defraying the necessary Expences of the Place : such as making the Revenues of the Lands and Houses contribute to feed the Expence of the Garrison ; as appears by the Votes of the House of Commons of the 22^d of *June* 1714. was the Intent of her late Majesty ; and Encouraging

couraging and Protecting the Trade of the Place: which will invite *English* Subjects to settle there, and by that Means give a considerable Encrease to the Exportation of our home Manufactures.

I shall now, *My Lords*, very briefly enumerate the Difficulties which *Gibraltar* has hitherto labour'd under; and then propose such Remedies as, I conceive, may make it flourish, and best answer the Intention of easing the Public Burthen.

The greatest Misfortune to this Place is the Want of a well-constituted Civil Power, from which Merchants and other Dealers might have speedy Relief against all unfair Practices, and which might summarily decide all controverted Cases: For Bargains and Agreements are of little Force amongst private Men, but by Virtue of that Power which the Law has to compel both Parties to Performance; and as Contracts are vain and ineffectual, where no Law is to be had, so Trade will be fruitless between Those who have no way to bring each other to Justice. And as to all Representations made in *England*, as they are inconsistent with Dispatch, which is the Life of Trade; so Experience has clearly evinced how little Redress is to be expected from such a tedious Method.

The want of a Civil Judge to determine in such Cases, has had this ill Effect, that the *Spaniards*, who during the late Peace, were willing to trade with the Inhabitants, finding that there was no such regular Course of Justice to defend them from being imposed upon, in a manner forbore all Dealing with the Place. And by this Defect, the Debts of the Town from the Shopkeepers and other Retailers, to the Merchants, who often are under a Necessity of trusting them, are become very large.

If we consider how far the Goodness or Badness of Coin influ-

influences all Commercial Dealings, it may not be reckon'd the least Misfortune of the Place, that all the Current Cash, wherewith the Retail Trade is chiefly carry'd on, consists of a base sort of Money, coined by the present Emperor at *Barcelona*, upon his Exigencies in the late War; which since the first Coinage, has been much encreas'd and counterfeited by the *Jews*, who were formerly upon the Place; whereby all Commodities that are imported to the Garrison, are enhanced in Price in proportion to the Badness of the Coin.

It may be farther reckon'd among the Inconveniences that the Trade of *Gibraltar* is subject to, that Consuls from the *French*, *Dutch* and *Genoese* Nations exact Consulage, and make other Demands, not only upon Goods consign'd to Foreigners, but even upon such as come to His Majesty's Subjects; who ought unquestionably to be entitled to the same Privileges here as if they dwelt in *England*, where no such Irregularity is allowed of.

Having thus hinted to your Lordships some of the many Difficulties *Gibraltar* lies under, at present, I shall beg leave to offer a few Considerations towards the Redress of them.

As to the establishing a Civil Power, many Uses, (too tedious to be mention'd) might be made of such an Authority, placed in the Hands of an honest skilful Person. Every Thing would thereby be reduc'd to a proper Regulation; and Traders be render'd secure in their Industry. Whereas at present there is little Safety to the Dealer, but the common Integrity of Mankind; which is a very slender Security; for tho' some Men, for the sake of their Honour and Credit, will keep strictly to their Words, how few do we meet with, in the general Course of Trade, upon whose Minds such Considerations have any Influence?

As to the Coin, the only effectual way to remove the Prejudice the Trade of this Place receives by the Badness of it,

it, is to cry down the Bad, and introduce good *Spanish* Money in the room of it. And it were to be wish'd the Government would be perswaded to bear the Loss; which otherwise would fall heavy on the Merchants, who are oblig'd to take that sort of Money for the Goods they sell to the Shopkeepers and other Dealers in the Place.

It is difficult to assign the Reasons for first admitting a *Genoese*, *Dutch* or *French* Consul into this Garrison; the Motives for the original Institution of that Office being all wanting at *Gibraltar*. Neither of these Nations have any creditable Subjects that dwell upon the Place, who, upon National Contests, can want a Person of Figure to protect them: nor are there any Law Suits, or public Charges arising from Disputes or other Accidents, that require a common Stock to defray them: All therefore that these Consuls do here is to discourage our Trade, and be constant Spies upon our Coasters. That the Court of *England* look'd on such Persons to be useless, as well as dangerous, in a Government of this Nature, is not to be doubted, when it is consider'd what Application they made to the Court of *France*, for removing a Consul who was sent from thence to *Minorca*: which, as it was effected, 'tis hoped will be esteem'd a sufficient Precedent for removing these from *Gibraltar*, after the same manner.

My Lords, In these Hints your Lordships have some of the Methods for improving and encouraging this valuable Settlement. Let us now see what Reasons there is to part with it.

The only Pretence that is urged for delivering up a Place of this Importance, and that may be render'd yet more useful is, That it cannot be preserved in the good Condition and Safety that it requires, but at a great Expence. If this were any Argument at all, it would be an equal good Argument for yielding up every new Acquisition; which at first

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must be in Proportion expensive; nay, even *Ireland* it self was a long Time a great Expence to the Nation. But this is so far from being a good Reason, that, as I have shewn, if this Place were yielded up to save this Expence, the Nation would suffer infinitely more than maintains the Garrison, by the Loss of it. According to the best Information I can procure, the annual Charge to the Nation for maintaining *Gibraltar*, including the contingent Expences, amounts to near Fifty Six Thousand Pounds *per Ann.* beside the Allotment by Parliament for the Fortifications; which, one Year with another, is Four Thousand Pounds *per Ann.* But of this last Article your Lordships may have an exact Account from the Estimates deliver'd into the House of Commons. This Sum of near Sixty Thousand Pounds, then, is expended after this manner.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
To the Pay of Three Regiments ———	31362	16	00
To the Pay of the Governor and Staff-List	2772	05	04
To the Officers of Ordnance and Train, about	3000	00	00
To Contingencies —————	1008	03	04
To Victualing the Forces, &c. ———	17793	00	00
To Allowance of Parliament for Fortifications	4000	00	00
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I have omitted here the Allowance for Coal for the Use of the Garrison; which I suppose between Six or Eight Hundred Pounds *per Annum.*

This Amount of Sixty Thousand odd Hundred Pounds, is so inconsiderable an Expence, compar'd with the Advantages that flow from our Possessing this Place, that I wonder what can induce Gentlemen to urge it: For besides the vast Benefit of *Gibraltar* to the numerous Traders to *Spain*, *Italy*, *Turkey*, and *Barbary*; and besides all the Advantages of it to our Ships of War, and the Honour and Profit that accrues from

from it to the State ; I believe your Lordships will find that the Customs on the Exports and Imports of the *Mediterranean* Trade are so large, that Nothing can justify our parting with a Place, which is the chief Defense and Safeguard of that Trade. I call it the chief Defense ; for tho' *Port Mahon* at present is an additional Security, yet if *Gibraltar* were deliver'd up, it would then be not only less useful, but might probably not continue long in our Hands : For 'tis not to be doubted, but the *Spaniards* (especially if at any Time hereafter they should be in Alliance with *France*,) would so improve the Advantage of having *Gibraltar* restored to them, that being Masters both of That and *Ceuta*, they would prevent our Trading Ships either entring the *Streights* at all, or at very great Hazard, or Expence of Convoys ; and consequently, in great measure, prevent any Benefit to us from *Port-Mahon*, as to our Trade.

But even this Expence of maintaining *Gibraltar*, as has been mention'd, may in time if not totally, yet be very much lessen'd to the Government by the Settlement of a Civil Power there, and the Encouragement of the Trade of the Place in the Hands of *English* Subjects. To which End :

1. The House-Rents, and Fines upon Entry, may be apply'd towards this Public Charge.

2. It will be no Hardship, if all Ships that come into the Bay are obliged to contribute, by paying what is customary in other Ports for Anchorage ; especially when, by removing the Consuls, no other Duty will be exacted.

3. There may also be demanded an Acknowledgment for Goods landed there ; as in *Leghorn*, and other Free Ports.

4. The Crown may grant Leases of the Lands and Houses of the Place for a certain Term of Years ; which would encourage Families to settle there, and very much conduce not only to the restoring of the Town to its former Beauty, but

but render it very populous, and abundantly add to its Security.

5. The Revenue of the Garrison might likewise be increas'd by the Government's Reclaiming several Houses given away during the Time of the Prince of *Hesse's* being Governour.

There are several other Ways of raising Money for the Public Use, which would naturally follow a regular and well-appointed Civil Government; all which would daily improve and encrease, in proportion to the Encouragement that Industry would find under the Protection of wholesome Laws.

My Lords,

I have only to add to these Arguments for keeping *Gibraltar*, the Mention of a Circumstance, which shews the great Convenience of the Place to our Men of War, as well as to our Merchant-men; I mean, the late Retiring of our Ships thither after the Action between Commodore *Cavendish* and the *Spaniards*.

Upon the whole, I doubt not but your Lordships will be so fully convinc'd of the Importance of *Gibraltar* to the Trade and to the Honour of *Great-Britain*, that you will do all that is possible to prevent so false a Step, as the Restitution of it to *Spain*; if it shall be found that there is any such Intention. I am,

My Lords,

Your Lordships, &c.

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